

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

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BIOLOGICAL SURVEY IS ASSIGNED PART OF FLORIDA LAND UTILIZATION PROJECT

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Administration of about 22,000 acres of land included within the 281,000-acre Wakulla Land Utilization Project of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in Leon and Wakulla Counties, Florida, has been assigned to the ^{Bureau of} Biological Survey.

The change in administration from the Farm Security Administration to the Biological Survey was effected by an Executive Order extending the borders of the adjacent St. Marks Migratory Bird Refuge. Addition of the 22,000 acres to areas already acquired or in process of acquisition brings the total refuge area up to 89,000 acres.

Begun in 1934, the Wakulla project was designed to correct maladjustments in land use resulting from settlement of land unsuited for farming purposes and the continuous production of naval stores without regard for conservation of forest resources.

Through funds made available from relief appropriations, the land has been restored to the use for which it is naturally best suited -- forestry combined with wildlife and recreational uses. In pursuance of this program, the portion of the project primarily suited for wildlife has been turned over to the Bureau of Biological Survey.

Originally a hundred-acre plot under Department of Commerce jurisdiction for lighthouse purposes, the St. Marks refuge serves as a winter haven for migratory waterfowl. Thousands of Canada geese, along with large flocks of lesser scaups, black ducks, mallards, and pintails concentrate there each season. Gulls, terns, and shore birds also remain on the refuge all winter. Deer, quail, wild turkeys, minks, and raccoons inhabit the upland sections.

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